

The Eucharist:

1. What is the Eucharist?

The Eucharist is one of the sacraments of initiation. By celebrating the Eucharist we are fulfilling the command of Jesus to “eat His flesh and drink His blood”: *“Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you”* (John 6: 53-56). In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is perpetuated and we are able to enter into the Heavenly Liturgy by receiving the body and blood of Christ.

2. When was the sacrament of the Eucharist instituted?

The sacraments of the Eucharist and the Priesthood were instituted at the Last Supper before the passion and death of Jesus. Jesus took bread in his hands. He broke it and gave it to them saying *“Take this and eat it all of you, this is my Body which will be given up for you”*. Then, he took the cup of wine in his hands and said *“take this and drink of this, all of you. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me”*. (Luke 22:14-23)

3. How is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist carried out?

The Eucharist unfolds in two great parts which together form one, single act of worship. The **Liturgy of the Word** involves proclaiming and listening to the Word of God. The **Liturgy of the Eucharist** includes the presentation of the bread and wine, the prayer containing the words of consecration, and communion.

4. Who is the celebrant of the Eucharist?

The celebrant of the Eucharist is a validly ordained priest (bishop) who acts in the Person of Christ the Head and in the name of the Church.

5. What are the essential and necessary elements for celebrating the Eucharist?

The essential elements are wheat bread and grape wine.

6. How is Christ present in the Eucharist?

Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist in a unique and incomparable way. He is present in a true, real, and substantial way, with his Body and his Blood, with his Soul and Divinity.

What is the meaning of transubstantiation?

Transubstantiation means the change of the whole substances of bread into the substance of the Body of Christ and of the whole substance of wine into the substance of his Blood. This change is brought about in the Eucharistic prayer through the efficacy of the word of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit. The outward characteristics of bread and wine remain unaltered.

How long does the presence of Christ last in the Eucharist?

The presence of Christ continues in the Eucharist as long as the Eucharistic species subsists.

7. Does the breaking of the bread divide Christ?

The breaking of the bread does not divide Christ. He is present whole and entire in each of the Eucharistic species and in each of their parts.

8. When does the Church oblige her members to participate at Holy Mass?

The Church obliges the faithful to participate at Holy Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation. She recommends participation at Holy Mass on other days as well.

9. When must one receive Holy Communion?

The Church recommends that the faithful, if they have the required dispositions, receive Holy Communion whenever they participate at Holy Mass. However, the Church obliges them to receive Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season.

10. Who can receive Holy Communion?

Under ordinary circumstances only baptized Catholics who are in a state of grace can receive Holy Communion. Others have the option of either remaining in their seat for private prayer during the time of distribution of Holy Communion, or come up in the procession and ask for a blessing from the Minister of Communion.

11. What is required to receive Holy Communion?

To receive Holy Communion one must be fully incorporated into the Catholic Church and be in the state of grace, that is not conscious of being in mortal sin. Anyone who is conscious of having committed a grave sin must first receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before going to Communion. Also important for those receiving Holy Communion are a spirit of recollection and prayer, observance of the fast prescribed by the Church, and an appropriate disposition of the body (gestures and dress) as a sign of respect for Christ.

12. What kind of worship is due to the sacrament of the Eucharist?

The worship due to the sacrament of the Eucharist, whether during the celebration of Mass or outside it, is the adoration given to God alone. The Church guards with the greatest care Hosts that have been consecrated. She brings them to the sick and to other persons who find it impossible to participate at Mass. She also presents them for the solemn adoration of the faithful and she bears them in processions. The Church encourages the faithful to make frequent visits to adore the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle.

13. What are the fruits of Holy Communion?

Holy Communion increases our union with Christ and with his Church. It preserves and renews the life of grace received at Baptism and confirmation and makes us grow in love for our neighbour. It strengthens us in charity, wipes away venial sins and preserves us from mortal sin in the future.

Scripture passages referring to the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist:

Jn6: 36-71 –Eucharist promised

Mt26:26, Mk14:22, Lk22:17- Eucharist instituted

1Cor10:16- Eucharist → participation in Christ's body and blood

1 Cor11: 23-29- Receiving unworthily= guilty of his body and blood

Ex12:8, 46- Paschal lamb has to be eaten

Jn1:29- Jesus called "Lamb of God"

1Cor2:14-3:4- explains what "the flesh" means in Jn6:63

Ps14:4, Is9:18-20, Mic3:3, 1Sm23:15-17, Rv17:6,16- to symbolically eat and drink one's body and blood= assault.